IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT 1 SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS 2 HOUSTON DIVISION 3 4 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) CRIMINAL ACTION NO. VS. 5) 4:16-CR-03 6 OMAR FARAJ SAEED AL HARDAN) 1:39 P.M. 7 HEARING 8 BEFORE THE HONORABLE LYNN N. HUGHES 9 JANUARY 4, 2018 10 **APPEARANCES:** FOR PLAINTIFF: MR. RALPH EDWARD IMPERATO 11 Assistant United States Attorney 12 1000 Louisiana, Suite 2300 Houston, Texas 77002 13 FOR DEFENDANT: 14 MR. DAVID ADLER David Adler PC 6750 West Loop South, Suite 120 15 Bellaire, Texas 77401 16 INTERPRETER: 17 MS. NINA MIDWAY COURT REPORTER: 18 Heather Alcaraz, CSR, FCRR, RMR 19 Official Court Reporter 515 Rusk, Suite 8004 2.0 Houston, Texas 77002 (713)250-558421 Proceedings recorded by mechanical stenography, transcript produced by computer. 22 THIS TRANSCRIPT HAS BEEN FURNISHED AT PUBLIC EXPENSE UNDER THE 23 CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT AND MAY BE USED ONLY AS AUTHORIZED BY COURT ORDER. UNAUTHORIZED REPRODUCTION WILL RESULT IN AN ASSESSMENT 2.4 AGAINST COUNSEL FOR THE COST OF AN ORIGINAL AND ONE COPY AT THE

OFFICIAL RATE. General Order 94-15, United States District

Court, Southern District of Texas.

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(Call to Order of the Court.)
13:17:56 1
                       THE COURT: Thank you. Please be seated.
13:40:24 2
                       The United States of America versus Omar Faraj Saeed
13:40:31
            Al Hardan.
                       MR. IMPERATO: Good afternoon, Your Honor. Ted
13:40:38 5
             Imperato for the United States.
                       THE COURT: Good afternoon. Happy New Year.
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                       MR. IMPERATO: Happy New Year to you.
                       THE COURT: Apparently, there was a problem with the
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             transition to the new year, and we got some of Minnesota's new
             year, and there's a reason I don't live in Minnesota.
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                       Can you not hear?
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                       Just come talk to him.
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                       Ma'am --
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                       THE INTERPRETER: Yes, Judge.
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                       THE COURT: -- take that off. Translate.
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                       THE INTERPRETER: Yes.
13:41:18 18
                       THE COURT: Yes, sir.
13:41:1919
                       THE INTERPRETER: Yes, sir.
                       THE COURT: This is a court.
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13:41:2221
                       THE INTERPRETER: Yes, Judge.
13:41:2222
                       THE COURT: Despite Adler being here, this is not a
            bus station.
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                       Raise your right hand, please.
13:41:2824
13:41:3425
                  (Defendant sworn.)
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MR. ADLER: Judge, if I could, before we get started, if we're -- I suspect we may go into attorney/client matters, and if that's the case, I'm going to have to ask the government to step out and the courtroom to be sealed and have an ex parte hearing. I don't know what the Court and Mr. Al Hardan are going to discuss, but if we go down that road, I would ask --

THE COURT: Well -- of course, he's free to assert

MR. ADLER: Correct. But I think I'm ethically obligated to request that. I don't know what you and Mr. Al Hardan may raise, but if it gets into something that's strictly an attorney --

THE COURT: Ma'am, when you translate, speak up. You don't have to whisper to him.

THE INTERPRETER: Okay.

that privilege at any point.

THE COURT: I know what you're doing. I know that you're not talking sports or anything. So just speak up so he can stand up and look me in the eye while he hears what I'm saying.

THE INTERPRETER: Okay, Judge, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Did you agree not to appeal in your plea agreement?

THE DEFENDANT: I just want to appeal.

THE COURT: Did he?

MR. IMPERATO: Yes, Judge. 13:43:11 1 THE COURT: I didn't print it. 13:43:11 2 MR. IMPERATO: I have a copy, Judge, and he did. 13:43:12 3 paragraph five of the plea agreement, it says that the 4 defendant --5 THE COURT: Would you flip it to paragraph five and 13:43:20 7 show it to him. MR. IMPERATO: Yes. 13:43:25 8 (Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Adler and the 13:43:41 9 defendant.) 13:43:4310 13:43:4911 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Your Honor, yes, I -- I did waive when I pled guilty -- excuse me --12 13:43:5513 THE COURT: We talked about that at your 14 re-arraignment where you pleaded guilty. 13:43:5915 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) When I pled quilty, yes, 16 I waived that right. 13:44:0117 THE COURT: You said under oath that you understood that, and you had read the document and you talked to Mr. Adler 18 about it, and it was in the little sheet that Mr. Imperato gave 19 2.0 us as a handy guide to the proceedings. So did Mr. Adler give you any indication that he wanted to represent you after the 21 sentencing? 22 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) He said: If you need 13:44:3723 help -- if you need help, I might help you with appeal. That's 24

all what he told me, but I don't know if he got to take over the

case or not.

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THE COURT: What is it that he did not do at the sentencing that you thought he should have done?

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) To defend me more than what I expected.

THE COURT: What did you expect him to say? First of all, at the sentencing, you had already pleaded with your own mouth that you were guilty.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: And then you had, what was it, six weeks, two months to --

MR. IMPERATO: Actually, two -- two years.

THE COURT: Well, no, from the --

MR. IMPERATO: Yeah. It was about a year. It was over a year, Judge.

THE COURT: So you had a year to talk about the sentencing with Mr. Adler.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Yes, Your Honor. We talked.

THE COURT: And then, at some point, the probation office produced a report, and that was shared with Mr. Adler, and he shared it with you. You may not have read the whole presentencing report because there's a page full of your family, and you know who your family are. So you could have skipped that one safely.

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other.

But tell me how he was to defend you that he did not

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) The first thing, Your Honor, about the phones -- the cell phones, when you ask me about how many cell phones you have, I said I have one, and you asked the government. All what they found and in my father closet is not -- is not mine. All of them not mine.

THE COURT: The whole place is your father's, isn't

THE DEFENDANT: You mean the apartment?

THE COURT: Yes. The closet, the carpet, the toilet, the windows, it's all leased to your father.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Not everything. Like my personal things -- I mean, not everything, Your Honor. I mean, I can't understand --

THE COURT: The apartment is your father's.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) My name and his name on the lease.

THE COURT: Your name's on the lease?

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Yes, sir.

THE COURT: Have you ever paid the rent?

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) We share. We help each

THE COURT: How much have you paid rent? You haven't paid any for the last two years.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) About 550.

THE COURT: Every month until you were arrested?

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Yes, sir.

THE COURT: I already knew that you were co-tenants with your father, but you didn't bring that up, that it was your father's closet.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Let me -- can I explain something really quick?

THE COURT: Sure.

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THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Just because -- can I explain? Because I give you the answer by just one second.

THE COURT: Sure.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) When I came, Your Honor, at the sentencing hearing, according to the -- to the average of the sentence -- we respect your decision, Your Honor, but according to the average that my lawyer, he -- he -- he told me about, and according to the cases that I -- we looked at, and -- and I just came here. I don't want to talk too much. I don't want to -- to -- to feel -- I don't want to feel that I want to fight. I'm innocent. So I just -- I rather to be silent more than I talk.

THE COURT: But, then, you cannot talk at all,
but -- Mr. Al Hardan, I don't mind that you want to appeal. I
don't mind that you want a lawyer on appeal. I do kind of mind
that you weren't candid with me, but it's not on a personal

level. It's on an intellectual level.

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What I do mind is that you are making it sound as if one of the most thoughtful, courageous, thorough, and personable lawyers didn't do something you thought he should have, something that you didn't mention, and after several questions, the best you could do was he didn't tell me that it was your father's closet and not his [sic] closet.

Are you suggesting that Mr. Imperato should get the FBI to go out and arrest your father? You don't really have to answer that. I think we know what the answer should be, but...

You were furnished a lawyer, a lawyer of distinction, and your response to that is to slander him, blame the outcome on you — blame it on him. You were sentenced not what he recommended and argued for, artfully, and not what Mr. Imperato asked for and argued thoroughly, but what I thought the correct number, under the circumstances of the case, the public's interest and people like you — and by that I don't mean anything about people with black hair or green jumpsuits, but people who have pleaded guilty to a felony terrorism crime — and I read all those cases that he read. I read all the cases Mr. Imperato read because they gave them to me, and I found sufficient differences not to follow his (indicating) and sufficient differences not to follow his (indicating).

You are actually fortunate to have both lawyers.

Mr. Adler is a -- an amazing defense counsel. Mr. Imperato is a

thoughtful, thorough and generous prosecutor. They have some 1 2 nutcases over there, so I've heard. I've never actually met one. 3 THE DEFENDANT: May I ask you some questions, 13:52:50 Your Honor? 5 THE COURT: You're going to have to talk to do it. 13:52:53 THE DEFENDANT: You gave me the time or the 13:53:07 7 opportunity to appeal, correct? 8 THE COURT: I got a letter from you that said you 13:53:16 9 wanted to appeal and said a bunch of other stuff. So I just 10 11 treated that as if it were a proper notice of appeal. So I don't know. Was it on time? 13:53:3512 13:53:3913 MR. IMPERATO: If he had the right to appeal, it 14 was -- it was timely. 13:53:4615 THE DEFENDANT: You know, I wrote this letter and sent 16 it according to your opinion. 13:53:5617 THE COURT: Well, it wasn't anything about me. 13:53:5918 THE CASE MANAGER: He was talking about the notice of right to appeal. 19 THE DEFENDANT: Because you mentioned --13:54:0420 THE COURT: We give everybody a notice to appeal, and 13:54:0521 the form you signed where I advised -- I advised you orally, and 22 23 then I gave you a written piece of paper, and in there it talked 24 about if you agreed with the government, and on that agreement

got me to convict you, that you could not appeal.

But I tell everybody what their rights would have 1 2 been, and we give everybody a notice of when they could, and 3 when you wrote me the letter saying you wanted to, I didn't write back and say you didn't do it on the proper form. I just 4 said I'm treating that as a notice of appeal. 5 People file things all the time that are wrong, but we 13:55:03 7 just file everything. If somebody wants to file something, they can file it, and that it makes no sense and can't be done 8 legally, then we eventually process it. So yes, I filed your 9 letter as a notice of appeal. What'd you want me to do? 10 THE DEFENDANT: I understood that you opened this door 13:55:3911 12 for me. Can you please give me five minutes to talk to my 13 attorney before I give you the proper answer, if I agree or not? 14 Maybe I do not -- I did not understand --13:56:0615 THE COURT: Well, if you had read --13:56:0716 THE DEFENDANT: -- at the hearing sentence. 13:56:1217 THE COURT: You had the right to a trial by jury, didn't you? 18 13:56:2219 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. 13:56:2320 THE COURT: And you told me you didn't want to do that. 21 13:56:3122 THE DEFENDANT: Yes. Yes, Your Honor.

THE COURT: So you cannot now ask for a jury. I told

I changed nothing either for you or against you in the plea

you you had a right to appeal, but you were agreeing not to do

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it.

1 agreement. I followed it to the letter.

Filing a piece of paper that you mailed me in the file with a description of it that, as near as I could figure out it -- was meant, is not granting you any additional rights. You had your right. You gave them up.

THE DEFENDANT: What --

THE COURT: We got your first --

THE REPORTER: I'm sorry. I didn't --

THE COURT: You said that --

THE DEFENDANT: What kind of right, Your Honor?

THE COURT: Pardon?

THE INTERPRETER: He -- what kind of right,

Your Honor?

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THE COURT: I don't follow it. I don't know what that means.

THE DEFENDANT: You know, I -- I don't understand what kind of rights, more than the rights that you gave me.

THE COURT: I didn't give you any. You started with a bunch that the law gives you, and you handed me a document that you had signed, your lawyer had signed, Mr. Imperato had signed, and I went through it with you and said did you agree to all this, and you said absolutely, and I followed that. I actually don't have to follow it, but I did, and it clearly said I could sentence you up to 20 years.

All right. So Glenda, what day did we file the letter

1 as a... THE CASE MANAGER: The notice of appeal? 13:59:01 2 THE COURT: Yes, ma'am. 13:59:03 3 THE CASE MANAGER: It was December 26, sir. 13:59:03 4 THE COURT: When? 13:59:05 5 THE CASE MANAGER: December 26th. 13:59:07 6 THE COURT: Okay. So it got here on time. 13:59:08 7 THE CASE MANAGER: Yes, sir. 13:59:13 8 13:59:14 9 THE COURT: I mean, one of them you -- it says you 10 mailed on the 19th, and it didn't get here till the 26th. other you mailed here mailed on the 25th, and it got here the 11 12 27th. So we obviously responded to the first letter and not the 13 second one. 13:59:3114 Is the second one on the docket sheet? 13:59:3415 THE CASE MANAGER: Yes, sir. They're both on the 16 docket sheet. 13:59:3617 THE COURT: Okay. THE CASE MANAGER: They're different letters. 13:59:3818 THE COURT: All right. So you've told me that 13:59:5119 20 Mr. Adler is no good because the sentencing didn't come out the way you would have liked. That's not a defect to Mr. Adler. 21 22 That's a defect in me. 14:00:1423 THE DEFENDANT: Can I explain why? 14:00:1624 THE COURT: Well, I asked you to, but sure. 14:00:1925 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: All right. Speak up. 14:00:21 1 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) First thing, Your Honor, 14:00:23 2 that when you asked the lawyer about --3 THE COURT: Speak up. Come on. 14:00:30 4 THE DEFENDANT: -- did you -- did you cut the 14:00:31 5 relationship with the informant, he said: Unfortunately, not 6 7 immediately. THE COURT: Say that again. 14:00:39 8 THE DEFENDANT: He answered you, Your Honor, that: 14:00:40 9 Unfortunately, Al Hardan didn't cut the relationship with the 10 11 informant immediately. And instead, if he show you the -- the good side, 14:00:4812 13 which is I cut the relationship for up to one year until I got 14 arrested -- so he mentioned -- he didn't mention the good side. 15 He mentioned the bad side for me. That's first thing. 14:01:0516 Second thing --14:01:0517 THE COURT: What is "the good side"? 14:01:0718 THE DEFENDANT: That I cut the relationship with the informant for up to one year until I got arrested. 19 THE COURT: It's all in the presentence report. We 14:01:1220 discussed it, and my recollection is Mr. Adler said something 21 like you really ought to cut it down because he worked. And I 22

did cut it down from what the government wanted, didn't I?

stopped to speak with him, the informant.

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) No, Your Honor. I -- I

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THE COURT: I reduced your sentence, I believe, at the 14:01:45 1 2 hearing citing your work with the informant as one reason I 3 wasn't giving you 20 years. If you want, I'll give you 20 years. That's not a defect in Adler. You're just unhappy 4 with the result. 5 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Okay. And -- and second 14:02:19 7 thing, he told me: I'm going to ask the judge to -- for six, and he might give you eight or nine. 8 So I'm hoping when I came here, Your Honor, that I'm 14:02:27 9 expecting nine to six months. 10 THE COURT: You were hoping for nothing. 14:02:3111 14:02:3412 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Well, I respect your decision, Your Honor, but that's what I --13 14:02:3714 THE COURT: Mr. Adler also told you he doesn't know 15 what I'm going to do. Mr. Adler's been here many years. We'll just sum it up that way. Mr. Imperato's been here many years, 16 17 and neither of them told you what I was going to do, and if you 18

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had asked me the day before the hearing, I couldn't have told you what I was going to do because I didn't decide until -remember I took a break?

Didn't I take a -- I wrote all kinds of numbers on my pad and notes about things, and then I went back there (indicating). I did drink a cup of coffee, too, but I also thought about this and came up with an answer, but none of that changes the facts to which you pleaded, and the good facts about

your background were explained to me. 1 Do I recall we had certificates of study while you 14:03:40 2 were in detention? So I knew all of that. Mr. Adler furnished 3 them to the Court, but you wanted to file a notice of appeal, so 4 we filed that letter as a notice of appeal. 5 Mr. Adler is under no obligation to represent you, and 14:04:13 7 at this point I would be reluctant to appoint him for his sake, not for yours. He's familiar with it. He knows everything, 8 which would save the public some money and help you. 9 THE DEFENDANT: I do have a question, Your Honor, in 14:04:4710 11 the plea agreement. (In English) Your Honor, the section about a plea 14:04:5812 13 agreement binding to -- to Southern District and --14:05:1114 And the "X" --(In English) Yeah, and you "X" it out --14:05:1215 14:05:1516 THE COURT: You-all signed it after it was crossed 17 out. THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Yes, Your Honor. 14:05:1818 14:05:1919 THE COURT: Yes. 14:05:1920 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) But I was -- I need just

to know, Your Honor: Is that -- that you make it binding to whole United States?

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THE COURT: Yes. Under the agreement as offered by the United States, they said that the agreement not to prosecute you was only limited to the Southern District of Texas.

Case 4:16-cr-00003 Document 142 Filed in TXSD on 03/05/18 Page 16 of 20 16 an illegal provision, which the government insists on putting in 1 2 there, and I strike it out because I don't like doing illegal things. And so that means that no federal agency can use, as 3 grounds for prosecution, what the government knew the day you 4 pleaded quilty, I quess -- the day you pleaded quilty. I did 5 that for your benefit. 6 THE DEFENDANT: (In English) And thank you, 14:06:27 7 Your Honor, for that, but I just want to -- just I want to 8 understand that issue, Your Honor. 9 THE COURT: Well, that's why you need a lawyer. 14:06:3110 11 just has gotten very complex. 14:06:4212 Before the sentencing guidelines, presentence reports 13 had been about six pages long, and we had, in my book, 14 essentially, all the data we needed: The range of sentences in 15 this district, the range of sentences nationwide. You had a 16 little distribution chart, and then you knew about his personal 17 background.

THE DEFENDANT: I just, Your Honor, want to ask my attorney regarding the appeal. May I?

THE COURT: About the plea?

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THE INTERPRETER: The appeal.

MR. ADLER: About the appeal.

THE COURT: You may ask Mr. Adler. Whether he's your attorney will turn on your decision and his decision. So yes, you may, assuming he wants to talk to you. Like the right to

THE DEFENDANT: Can I ask you a question?

THE DEFENDANT: (In English) Yes, Your Honor. I

(Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Adler and the

defendant.)

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MR. ADLER: Yolanda. First name Yolanda; last name

THE COURT: Are you writing those down somewhere,

THE COURT: Pardon?

Jarmon, but it's spelled J-A-R-M-O-N. She does --

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somebody?

MR. ADLER: I'm sorry? 14:20:05 1 THE COURT: Are you getting those, Heather? 14:20:07 2 14:20:12 3 THE REPORTER: I am, yes, Your Honor. 14:20:13 4 MR. ADLER: I can provide them to the Court. THE COURT: All right. If you'll -- because I don't 14:20:15 5 want to bless them with this without asking if they'd like to. 6 MR. ADLER: Sure. I can give you their contact 14:20:23 7 information, Judge. 8 THE COURT: Thank you. 14:20:26 9 MR. ADLER: I'll give you three or four or five, and 14:20:2710 11 then whatever the Court wants to... THE COURT: All right. I think that covers everything 14:20:3412 13 in the letter. So, Mr. Adler, thank you very much. 14:20:4114 MR. ADLER: Thank you, Your Honor. 14:20:4115 THE COURT: And bill us for this. 14:20:4416 MR. ADLER: What's that? 14:20:4517 THE COURT: Bill for today. 14:20:4618 MR. ADLER: Yes, Your Honor. (Sotto voce discussion between Mr. Adler and the 14:20:5019 14:20:5520 defendant.) THE COURT: He doesn't get big money like you do. 14:20:5621 THE DEFENDANT: I thank you, Your Honor, very much for 14:20:5922 23 your help. THE COURT: All right. We're adjourned. 14:21:0724 (Discussion off record.) 14:21:3325